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PASS TO THE LOWEST LEVEL COMMANDERS, SERGEANT MAJORS, SAFETY
OFFICERS AND SAFETY NCOS
LIEUTENANT GENERAL SCHULTZ SENDS
SUBJECT: FISCAL YEAR 2002 SAFETY MESSAGE

1. We, the senior leadership, have responsibility for each and every one of our soldiers. I urge you to keep this in mind as we support state and federal missions around the country and the world.

2. Last year, FY 01, twenty-one ARNG guardsmen died as a result of training events. Twelve soldiers died in privately-owned vehicle (POV) accidents, one in an army motor vehicle, one in a GSA vehicle, four as a result of personal injuries they incurred while on-duty, and three aircrew members died in an aircraft accident. As well, two civilians died in the POV accidents and 18 Air Guardsman died in the aviation accident.

3. Privately owned vehicle (POV) accidents remain the single leading cause of accidental death. Most of these accidents are indicative of inattention and possibly fatigue. Our soldiers are constantly placed in situations during which they must drive on public highways when they are fatigued. They drive to drill on Friday evenings after completing the week working their civilian jobs. Then they drive back home Sunday evening after undergoing a long weekend of training with their units. We, the leaders, must not place our soldiers and the public in this situation. Know your soldiers. Know your soldiers' limitations. Instruct your soldiers on the consequences of driving while fatigued and failure to pay full attention while driving. While activities in the aftermath of our recent national tragedy certainly have an increased sense of urgency and "real-world" basis, we simply cannot afford to compound our losses through accidents while performing our state and federal missions.

4. Personal injury accidents increased four-fold this fiscal year. One tragic accident occurred when a soldier accidentally shot another soldier in the neck during a night-fire training exercise. These accidents pinpoint the need for command emphasis, situational awareness and compliance with established standards.

5. The predominant disturbing trend is the number of heart attacks and seizures our soldiers are having before, during and after training related events. Stress the need for year round physical fitness. Good physical fitness is essential to reduce the risk of losing our soldiers to cardiac arrest during operations or training.

6. Safety is inextricably tied to readiness. Safety must be fully integrated into all we do in the army national guard. To improve our safety record, we must get beyond the lectures and instruction on risk management and assure that it is being applied. I ask each of you to personally assess the effectiveness of risk management in your units.

7. Safety is not a task; it is how we go about accomplishing that task. The key to safety is the application of risk management. The tenets of risk management, as covered in field manuals 100-14 and 3-100.12, must be embedded in every operation we undertake. This includes managing the endurance and duty days of our people. Bleary-eyed soldiers, wanting to do the right thing, staying on duty for days on end, themselves become a risk to an operation. Risk management remains the basic process by which we can reduce accidents. By applying the risk management principles, utilizing the five-step process, we can minimize our risks and protect the force. The FY 02 safeguard campaign theme, "take five," is dedicated to support our initiatives.

8. Our challenges for FY 02 are commanding. Our success is based on the nucleus of a disciplined and well-focused leadership team. At all times, the safety of soldiers must be uppermost in our minds. Commanders, leaders and supervisors alike, I challenge each and every one of you to make training year 2002 a safe year. I ask you to be vigilant.